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5 CORNHILL



THE
TENASSERIM ARCHIPELAGO.

I longed to see the Isles that gem
Old Ocean's purple dune.

THE above two lines of Byron express the feelings that smouldered within me for about eight years ; in fact, since a dear friend—now, like many another friend, past away—first told me of the glorious beauties of the Archipelago that lies off the Tenasserim coast. I have never seen any description of these islands ; for though some years since that happy writer Sherard Osboine—in ‘Blackwood,’ I think—wrote on the Malayan, he did not do so by the Mergui, Archipelago.

Fortune at length favoured my longings, and thus on a lovely cool morning—ay, cool although it was the month of March—I found myself one of a small but ‘extremely select’ party on board H.M. steamer ‘Nemesis,’ bound to see everything south of Maulmein that could be seen within a certain given time. Our party consisted of Mrs. Blake, Colonel Fytche, the Commissioner of the Tenasserim and Martaban Provinces ; Major Coote, the Superintendent of Police, and myself. *Vide diary*

Three hours' steaming, and we were round Green Island, and thus out of the Salween river, running down south with the high and thickly wooded hills of Amherst Province on our left, the wide ocean to our right, the clear heavens above, and the flashing blue or green water, according to depth, below us.

Shortly before sunset we reached Calligouk, the granite quarry of the Alguada reef lighthouse, and to be, *vide Brand of India*, the Brighton of Bengal.

The mile of mud on the eastern shore of this island resembles the Brighton beach about as much as the engineers' huts do those of the houses in Kemp Town or Sussex Square. What the western shore of the island may be I know not personally, but the above is fact as regards the eastern.

On landing, the close heat reminded me of that we experience in the Deccan previous to the first showers—a kind of suffocating feeling, no leaf moving, no insect stirring—and when animate and inanimate nature seem to sympathise with each other.

Government may expend as much as it pleases in making the island habitable, but they will be a strange people who will go and live on the island of Calligouk for pleasure.

Here we had to take in some valuable cargo for Tavoy, which being shipped before dark, we were off again ere night-fall, and morning found us passing a group of islands called the Moscows.

The entrance to the Tavoy river is very beautiful, particularly the proper right or western shore, for this river runs nearly north and south. It is a vile river, tortuous and shallow, and incapable of improvement; and yet it has, or

more properly had, its wealth, for either muddy bank is lined with the Nipa palm, which formed the roofs of all the houses in Maulmein ; but since the wise orders on the subject, carried out both in Rangoon and Maulmein, that every house in either town should be tiled or shingled, their chief markets being cut off, the Tavoy dunnee¹ vendors have looked blue—I mean in face—as for their legs they can't be any other colour, being always tattooed blue.

A severe thunder-storm coming on in the evening cleared the atmosphere, and consequently at sunrise on the following morning the view of Noalebo (the Buffalo's Hump), 4,000 feet above sea level, with its base wreathed in mist, causing his lesser though still gigantic brethren to stand out in bold relief, was grand indeed. Like most of the mountains in Burmah, the Buffalo's Hump is a mere ridge, no room thereon for the habitations of man.

Having quitted the Tavoy river, towards evening we arrived at the first island of any size. It takes its name from Tavoy, though it lies midway between that place and Mergui. It is about twenty-five miles in length and about eight in width at its widest part. The centre is very lofty, not much, if at all, below two thousand feet in height. It is seen clearly from Mergui, though the distance is somewhat more than fifty miles. Shortly after passing Tavoy Island, night set in intensely dark and squally ; and as it does not do to go cruising amongst the 'ten thousand islands' (called so by the Burmese), when the jib is not visible from the forecastle, we dropped anchor abreast of Long Island, and burnt a blue light to let the Mergui folks

¹ Dunnee Burmese for Nipa.

know that we were coming, and that they might, without any great impropriety, kill the fatted calf.

Abler pens have written on the effects of blue lights at sea ; therefore on that subject I will be dumb, though I might plagiarise on this to a magnificent extent.

The inky night now dappling 'gan to wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning main ;
The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the deep

And the 'Nemesis' had her anchor up and had run nearly a mile ere the sun had risen, and by eight o'clock we were looking down from the ridge of hills on which the houses of the gentry (three in number) and the public offices of Mergui are built, and the glorious flag run up to the flag-staff truck showed to the surrounding country that the Governor of these provinces formed one of our party.

What a lovely view was now before us ! About a hundred feet below was the native town, which, Burman-like, borders the arm of the sea or branch of the Tenasserim river, as it may be called, which at this spot is about a thousand yards wide, the opposite bank having the island of Madrimakan, consisting of two hills both thickly wooded, and the higher or northern one has numbers of fruit gardens on its lower slopes. I ascertained that this hill, which occupies so prominent a position in the middle ground of the picture, was something below six hundred feet in height ; another hundred feet at least should be allowed for the height of the trees.

Connecting these two hills is low ground covered with mangrove trees, and over this is seen another branch of the

sea ; then the beautifully undulating island of Mahsamban, and over this, with its mountain peaks rising above the clouds, the large, lofty, and doubtless very valuable island, called 'King's Island.' This is one of the largest of the whole group. It is about twenty-five miles in length and ten in its widest part. It possesses a fine bay, three miles wide at its entrance, which is from the northward, and has sufficient depth of water for the largest vessels. Here during the war the French fleet lay, and hence its name 'French Bay.'

These islands, all of which would produce every kind of spice, all manner of fruit found in India, besides many peculiar to themselves, which are found nowhere to the north of Mergui, and covered with forest trees yielding the most durable and best description of wood—with the exception of the teak, which is not found on them—and which are adapted so admirably for the growth of everything of the vegetable world found in tropical latitudes ; and to crown all, enjoying, by means of its continual showers, a genial and extremely equable climate ; are yet, with all these manifold advantages, lost to us. Future ages may convert them into spice islands ; but, at the present day, lack of population prevents advancement, and yet there are means for overcoming this difficulty on which I will touch hereafter.

With the exception of the Selungs, who are very few in number, and who cruise about to get sea-slugs, sharks' fins, and edible birds' nests, which latter sell for their weight in silver, and the pirates who sometimes murder the Selungs, or any one else whom they may chance to meet, these islands are uninhabited.

The environs of Mergui consist entirely of gardens, in which are grown the mangosteen, considered by some as the finest fruit under the sun ; the dorian, decidedly the most powerful as regards scent ; the nutmeg, and other fruits quite new to me although I had been a wanderer in many lands, and I had seen, as I imagined, most of the fruits grown in the 'far East'

Throughout the whole year light showers are continually falling at Mergui and amongst the islands of this archipelago ; and thus many fruit trees, flowers, and shrubs grow in these parts, which are not found even so little to the north as Tavoy.

From Mergui we made an excursion up the Tenasserim river. The views on it are entirely different from those on any of the rivers of British Burmah that I had then seen without a single exception. The hills, some of which are of considerable height—indeed, they may with greater propriety be termed mountains—are densely wooded from summit to base, the lower fringe, or that which grows out of the water, being generally composed of mangrove trees. It was very tantalising not being able to take a swim in the river, but sharks and alligators were effectual 'stoppers' to such amusement. Our party now consisted of four officers ; Captain Harrison, the Assistant-Commissioner of Mergui district, having there joined us.

We tried our luck after a herd of bison, in following which we came upon several boughs of a tree that had been freshly torn down. These, our Shan Shikarries told us, had been done by the Loo won, or wild man of the woods, an animal between a bear and a man, which they affirm exists in these jungles. If there is any truth in this the animal must have the strength of a gorilla to have torn down the branches we saw.

We came up to the herd of bison after a silent stalk for about a couple of hours, and one of our party got a shot which took effect, for we followed on their track a long distance by the blood, but ultimately gave it up perceiving the animal had been but slightly wounded, and would therefore go away mile upon mile before stopping.

After three days' absence we returned to Mergui, and shortly after, the steamer having arrived from the Andamans, whither she had taken the mails, we started for the south.

The channel after leaving Mergui is very tortuous, and we had the town bearing at almost all points of the compass from the steamer's deck ere we were fairly steaming away down the eastern shore of Mahsambau and King ■ Island.

Numbers of islands were sighted, neared, and passed during this day's run, until evening found us at the mouth of the Domel passage, formed by an island of the above name and that of Kisseraing, the former about twenty miles in length but scarcely five miles in width at its widest part; the latter not quite so long, but about double the width of the Domel. The dread of tigers is so great that neither Chinese nor Burmans will remain on this island after dark. We were informed that they invariably go off some distance from shore and sleep in their boats. We steamed away till nearly dark, when we dropped anchor, a Chinese junk letting go hers at almost the same moment, no doubt happy at having secured a berth that admitted of all hands on board of her going in for opium and sleep without any fear of pirates. No doubt many vessels, not English vessels, but junks and kattoos, are annually lost amongst these islands. The creese leaves none to tell the

tale, and the boat is broken up and disposed of in some quiet bay.

By dawn the order was given for 'up anchor,' and before it was broad daylight, we, as well as two junks—for another had dropped anchor near us during the night—were under weigh.

It would require much more powerful language than mine to describe the scenery we witnessed during this day's run. Close to our right was the Domel shore, which first appeared in the grey twilight of morn; gradually its upper peaks were touched by the sun, lower and lower came the light marking more and more distinctly where the spurs of the hills sprang from the main range and where the ravines and gorges descended and broke the hill sides. Still lower strikes with his beams the 'God of day,' till the trees growing in the water, the sandy bays, the purple sea, and the junks with their huge white sails are all bright in the rays of the new-born hour, and the lights and shadows ever varying as we move on rapidly through the calm waters of this strait.

Presently was pointed out to us a small cluster of islands called the 'Elephant Rocks,' named from the likeness of one of them to a couchant elephant. There was no mistaking their formation, and that they were, in such, entirely unlike any of these islands. Their perpendicular and fluted sides in some parts overhanging the sea, the absence of vegetation on them, or nearly so, their deeply serrated summits, and the almost black water line—the effect of the rock projecting far beyond its base—all showed that they were limestone. They consist of seven islands, lying about two miles distant from the Domel shore. We steamed between the two northern ones at

about eight o'clock in the morning, and thus the one on our right was in brilliant light, the other in deep shadow. The passage between each might be about 150 yards in width. We 'let fly' our guns into either rock, and splintered limestone, which descended into the water like grapeshot, showed the effect of each discharge. Of course the echo or reverberation from perpendicular cliffs like these would be fine.

These rocks are exactly similar to those found in various parts of Burnah, particularly about Maulmein—except that, instead of springing abrupt and perpendicular out of level plains, here they rise out of an exquisitely green sea. All these limestone hills are caverned; some contain gigantic caves. We embarked in one of the boats, and pulled under projecting rocks into a sea washed cave, where the water was really as clear as crystal, enabling us to see the white sand at a great depth. Here we sprung out upon a sandy beach, on which the sun never shines; and stooping low where huge stalactites, covered with shell-fish of various kinds, hung down from the dark roof of the cave, passing through the hill, we came out upon a lovely bay, which has been named Marble Bay, from the limestone in this spot having the appearance of fine white marble. The romance of our situation was greatly enhanced by our getting some capital oysters. We had a good pull back to the steamer, and by the time we got on board were quite ready for our breakfast. But the captain had not been idle, and while we had been under the hill visiting Marble Bay, he had discovered another, which neither he nor any of the party had ever seen before. It was at the most southern point of the southern island. It was the kind of

view a man may see once in his lifetime. On either side stood two rocks about three hundred feet in height ; these commanded the entrance to the bay, which was about two hundred yards in width. From these receded on either side rock beyond rock, all as sheer precipice ■ nature had, or art could have formed, with their summits all jagged and sharp as the teeth of a saw. At the back of the bay, and in the centre of the picture, stood a rock perpendicular on every side, but with a perfectly horizontal and level top. Above this rose to about four hundred feet other jagged and peaked rocks ; and below all this, and in strong contrast to the wild and sterile grandeur above, was a lovely strip of bright yellow sand, on which the green sea was gently surging.

We named this, in honour of the discovering vessel, 'Nemesis Bay.' I felt sorrowful as we turned the steamer's head away from this view, on which I may never again set eyes. However, onward ! onward !—there is still much more to be seen, and much more whereon to moralise.

We had turned our backs on the Elephant Rocks, and were steaming away south, amongst the 'ten thousand isles.' Whether there are really as many as the Burmans say, or whether it is merely a figure of speech, I cannot say. However, be that as it may, I counted within the small space between the fore and main masts no less than two-and-twenty separate islands. About five o'clock that afternoon, when between the two large islands called Sir Charles Forbes and Sir Robert Camplalls, we dropped anchor. Off the northern point of the latter lies a small island with the euphonious name of Kausanphwan, and the steamer lay about two miles distant from this

• Three of our party were in such a hurry to reach terra-firma again, that, though it was rapidly getting dark, they pulled on shore to this small island, trusting to what accommodation they might find there, in preference to the steamer's deck.

Shortly after dawn a boat was alongside, but I and my battery had been ready an hour before. While pulling on shore, the sky, water, and woods reminded me of some of the paintings of that exquisite dawn or evening colourist, Danby. When a short distance from the steamer I saw a very large fish of the skate species spring high out of the water. It was apparently about fifteen feet each way, in length and breadth, and had a whip tail. This was one of those slight incidents of life that is forcibly engraved on the memory. The shadow of that great fish, seen so distinctly against the dark red and purple streaks of the coming day, was a sight I think I shall never forget. On reaching the shore I found, thanks to the foresight of the Deputy-Commissioner, a couple of very nice comfortable huts erected on a narrow strip of land that connected two higher portions of the island, which was about a mile in length. At high water the sea was not more than thirty yards on either side of us, with sandy bays the very perfection of bathing places. Shortly after landing, my Sepoy Shikarie called me away to show me where a tiger had been sharpening its claws against a tree, not more than fifty yards or so from our huts.

These islands were all said to contain rhinoceros ; and, indeed, it was the hope of bagging some of these animals that induced us to stop here for a day or two.

Now if I did but possess the romantic pens of some who

have written on Indian sports—for instance, that of the ‘Old Shikarrie,’ who, by way of contrast to the rest of his book, has followed truth in the one single instance of putting his correct initials of H. A. L. to his work. I should of course make each of us slay his three couple or so of rhinoceros, and one of us at least should have been carried on the horn of his victim, which should have finally fallen gouged by the stalwart thumbs of the unwilling jockey, like the ‘snapping turtle of the dreary swindle swamp.’ The latter expletive, as applied to that swamp, might with justice be an appendage to the ‘Hunting Grounds of the Old World.’ Any one, male or female, is at perfect liberty to write a fiction, or even a romance, founded on fact; but when sporting fabrications, said to have occurred in the Deccan, Neilgherries, or elsewhere, with which localities sportsmen are well acquainted, are crowded one upon another, and as all having happened to the author, we cannot help contrasting his wonderful exploits with those of truth-telling men like Rice and Shakespear, and the result is that he is dubbed an astounding perverter of the truth, and his book a decided ‘take in.’ But I suppose fiction of even such transparent nature—and whether the scene is laid in the deep jungle or the drawing-room—pays, and that is all that many a poor fellow with only his half-pay or, may be, no pay at all—thinks of when fabricating a book.

The battery of our party was something formidable—rifles of all kinds, double-barrelled, four-barrelled, Lancaster’s elliptical, two-grooved, poly-grooved; and, to crown all, the big man of our party had a single-barrelled gun, carrying a six-ounce ball, which was driven out with seven drams and a ‘pinch’

of powder. I would almost as soon have allowed my horse to kick me on the shoulder as have fired off that gun for fun. Of course in firing at game this is quite lost sight of, and an aching and bruised shoulder is thought of only afterwards.

Two of our party—one of which, of aristocratic propensities, having got the gout went in one, and the other two, myself being one of them, went in two other small boats. We went over from the small island to Sir Robert Campbells, the distance across to the nearest point being about a mile and a half, and landing in different creeks, and going separately, searched for our game.

With the exception of the small isthmus on which the huts were erected, this was my first landing on any of these islands. Although I had been a wanderer amongst forest scenery in many parts of India as well as Burmah, there was much here that was quite new to me. The trees were gigantic, some of them old friends, such as the 'Thengau (*Hopea odorata*) ; the Kunneen, or wood oil tree ; the Pingatau, or iron wood ; but there were others with which I was not acquainted, particularly amongst the palm and date like plants. One, the 'marsh date palm,' is a very elegant plant ; and another, I think it is the stemless palm, or date, bears clusters of date-like-looking fruit, which when opened have a semi-transparent pulpy appearance, like that of the Palmyra ; it was also like the latter in taste. Only after he had seen me eat several did the Shan Shikarrie who accompanied me, say, 'If men eat those they become very sick.' As his knowledge of Burmese was limited, and mine of his language still more so, I could not argue the

point as to the propriety of his having told me this agreeable property in the fruit ere he saw me eat it.

The birds also were numerous, but most of them were old friends. Amongst the highest branches of the Thengan—by far the largest tree in these jungles—and the wood oil tree, only second in height to the above, was heard the 'koak koak' of the large toucan, or buceros. I have no doubt they build in these islands, as also the *Haliaeetus macei*, better known as the bald-headed fishing eagle, who chooses the very topmost branches as his watch-tower, and from which his scream sounds wildly grand, and is heard at a very long distance. His note was familiar to me, as every estuary on the Madras and Western coasts possesses its pair, whose principal amusement seems to be depriving the grey osprey of his hard-earned spoil. The one gives chase while the other, watching till the close-run osprey lets fall the fish, makes a swoop and catches it before it has regained its native element.

Having no wish to be coupled with mere 'garret-sportsmen,' truth compels me to say that only one of our party saw any rhinoceros on these islands, and he came upon four of them, wounding one, but it went off. In fact the only head of game that was bagged by us was one moose-deer, about one-third the size of a good English hare, and that fell to the gun of the gouty one. This is, I fancy, the very smallest of the deer species. It is a very beautiful creature. When beating the jungles at Mergui one of them walked up and almost touched my foot before perceiving me. I had not the heart to shoot it.

Our encampment was a true picture of rural expedients.

Our table consisted of pieces of mangrove for not a bamboo is to be seen in these parts—driven into the ground; other pieces were laid across, and a mat fastened above them, and a very good table it was. Our chairs were similarly constructed, but for want of a back I tied a spear behind mine. It is not improbable that our chairs and table have sprouted up into trees by this time.

On the following day we all went in separate boats, two to Sir Charles Forbes' Island, and I and the others to the 'Corries,' a smaller island lying a little to the north of the former. Tigers must abound, as on three different parts I saw their fresh footprints. It was here that my companion came upon the four rhinoceros, as I have before mentioned, but he was unfortunate in their position, as they were running away at the time that he fired. He followed the track for some distance, and took it up again the following day, but without success. Next morning, before it was quite light, we took a farewell swim, and then went on board the steamer. How pleasantly two or three months might be passed cruising amongst these islands! In less than that, only enough is seen to cause regret that the time will not admit of seeing more. This morning it looked stormy plenty of thunder and lightning, but we were fortunate in deriving the advantages, in a cloudy and cool forenoon, without any of the discomforts, of a storm.

After running past many other islands, amongst others the large one called Sullivan's, or Lampee, said to be the headquarters of the Selungs in these parts, we came to St. Matthews which seems a splendid island, and more lofty than any we have yet seen, having range above range of mountains upon it.

This island is decidedly the most important from its position. Thus, the Pakshan or Kraa river is the boundary of the British possessions to the south ; its left or sou'-east bank belongs to Siam ; but St. Matthews Island lies partly above and partly below the mouth of the Pakshan, *ergo*, to whom does it belong ? No one has as yet taken possession of it, and if a canal through the Isthmus of Kraa—a project first suggested, I believe, by Mr. O Riley, the present Deputy Commissioner of Bassein, and since then surveyed by two engineer officers—should become a fact, with one of its mouths in the Gulf of Siam, not far from the royal city of Bangkok, and with the other or south-western entrance commanded by the island of St. Matthews, why, then, the sight of the tricolour flying on the southern portion of that island would not be agreeable to the eyes of the British Lion. Forewarned is forearmed, and let us therefore lose no more time in hoisting the Union Jack on the most southern point, and in planting a small semi-military, semi-agricultural colony there. At first it would, of course, require assistance from Mergui, but I doubt not, *if well managed at the commencement* it would be independent of extraneous aid in two years and in five maybe it would become an exporting colony. Another and a very important use to which this body of men should be turned would be the guardianship and repair of the electric telegraph, which sooner or later must be carried down this coast to Singapore, from whence to diverge heaven only knows to what other quarters of the globe.

I must apologise for intruding this dull political matter into a paper which professes to be nothing more than the narrative of a pleasant trip ; but considering the formidable

hold the French have got on the further side of Siam, and considering the exclusive contract into which the King of Siam has entered with the French to supply them with teak for their ships, and also considering that it was only through the excellent management lately of Sir Robert Schomburg our able representative at the court of Siam a rupture between France and Siam was prevented, it must be acknowledged on the above grounds by everyone at all conversant with the geographical and political phases of the question, that the island of St Matthews, the key of the Pakshan, should not be left by us to be occupied by the second naval and the first military power in the world. *This was written previous to the formation of the*
Roman Empire

A large shoal lies off the north-west at the entrance to the Pakshan river, and we were obliged to come well to the south ere we could turn the vessel's head to the northward. We did not steam very far up, but dropped anchor about five, just at the mouth of the river. Two of our party, who had business, judicial and revenue, went off during the night to a place called Mallywoon, the furthest southern village of any size that owns British rule. All the tributaries of the Pakshan are rich in tin, and it is only this that makes Mallywoon of any value at all. Some time before sunrise we 'up anchor,' and were running up stream. The scenery on the British shore was very much that of the Tenasserim river,—hills densely wooded from summit to river's margin. The Siam shore showed on the hill sides cleared spots of cultivation, called by the Burmans 'toungyas.' On these the hill rice is grown. Standing further back were ranges of very lofty hills, appearing much higher than Nea-k-lo. About seven we dropt anchor opposite the

Renoung Creek, which joins the river from the Siam side. Boats were ordered out, and after an early breakfast we were off to see the Siam village of Renoung. As a precaution some muskets were placed at the bottom of both boats, for we did not know what kind of people we might have to encounter. Scarcely had we entered this creek when we came upon a Malay village, and if its inhabitants are not pirates, then never did looks or appearances more belie their owners. We pulled on shore here, and took in three of these men as guides. They all came armed with their creeses, but on a shout from the other boat, those in ours were disarmed. Such showing of distrust, however, and apparent doubt of our own powers, would never suit our Commissioner; he ordered their weapons to be returned to them. I could not help thinking of the tales those little pieces of crooked iron might tell, and of how many strange inspections through ribs and clavicles they had been witnesses. I have seen some of the greatest villains in the whole of Burmah in its various jails—men who had stuck at no crime, but for amiability ‘and gentleness of appearance,’ our younger guide surpassed them all. Unlike a Malay, he was tall, very powerful, a huge throat and neck, elegantly adapted for a hempen collar, and his strongly marked and highly arched eyebrows meeting between the eyes, gave him a peculiarly ferocious look; and yet he was undeniably a fine animal—but much in the same way that we might apply the term to a tiger. The *dégagé* air with which he pulled his creese out of his waistband and gave it up seemed to say, ‘I see you fear me,’ and was the perfection of lawless bravado. Surely after all this something dreadful in the way of an



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adventure ought to occur, but we will not forestall the sequel.

Unforeseen events prevented the continuation of this narrative, but knowing no further excuse for delaying the record of our excursion, it shall proceed onward as we did in the boat that bore us away from the Malay village up the Renoung Creek. The view up one of these streams (for several join and find one exit into the Pakshan river at this spot) was as beautiful as anything we saw 'down south.' Immediately in the foreground was a large house, Siamese in construction if not in inhabitants, the extremely acute-angled pitch of the pent roof showing who had been its builders. Around this were plantain trees and behind, a hill showing an old *tonngya* or hill cultivation. Between this and the Malay village was the mouth of the creek, and behind this village arose a hill of considerable height, which had also been cleared and cultivated. In the centre of the picture and flowing towards us was the stream, and on its right bank, as we looked up it, was a cluster of fine trees with their reflections as clear as in a mirror; though I hold this to be poor comparison, for clear water is a far more aerial and transparent reflector than any artificial contrivance. On the left the stream was lined with tall graceful trees, I imagine allied in some way to the mangrove, with which it is found growing. These faded away more and more dim until lost in the blending of the mountains which sank down into the river. Above these arose hill above hill, the highest attaining, I have no doubt, five thousand feet in altitude. Rain was falling in some of the gorges; the rest of the picture was all bathed in that hazy tropical light which lends to mountains

greater height, to foliage and waters a greater softness, and imparts to the whole picture that beautiful gradation throughout, for illustrations of which I refer the reader to the prints from Turner's pictures. Strange how well that artist's works appear when the engraver has exercised his skill on them, and yet in original tone it has always seemed as though the artist, having finished his work, upset a paint-pot over it. X

Our onward journey up the Renoung Creek reminded me of scenes depicted (I think) in 'Tom Cringle's Log ;' pulling on through mangrove swamps till not only the trees met over our heads, but until there was no longer room for our oars. The roots of the mangrove and those of other saline aquatic trees and plants assumed fantastic shapes, and their trunks were loaded with different kinds of fine orchids and hoyas ; but charms of eye did not entirely constitute the pleasures of this trip ; our feelings were also consulted. The heat in this narrow creek was intense and suffocating, as not a breath of air could reach us, and the gadflies and mosquitoes were on unpleasantly familiar terms, settling on the inside of the awning and from thence on to ourselves. After a pull of about five miles we reached the village, and the first objects that struck our eyes were two English-built boats with the name ' Antelope ' painted on their sterns. Of course we imagined these were the remains of a case of piracy ; however, we afterwards learned that the Governor, as the Chinese farmer of this district is termed, had some two or three years since purchased a brig or schooner of the above name, for the purpose of exporting his tin to Penang, and bringing back rice and other necessities, and thus was explained the mystery of the boats.

X This remark is applicable only to Turner's later Paintings - His earlier ones are wonderfully beautiful and greatly resemble those of Claude Lorrain.

A walk of about two miles brought us to the main portion of the village and where the Governor's house is situated, which is surrounded by a high stockade, a sign of insecurity that did not appear at Mallywoon on the British side of the river ; but as a sign of laws and the civilisation attendant thereon, we saw a prisoner in chains who had been caught stealing (of course) tin. The Governor was absent, having gone to Bangkok to pay the revenue of his district, but his wife and family received us. They had a comfortable house with tables, chairs, and, though scarcely to be regarded as appropriate drawing-room furniture, two four-posters ; but the beds did certainly stand in a kind of recess, and were ornamented with looking glasses—I suppose for the gentleman and lady to see how they looked in their nightcaps.

The Governor's wife seemed a semi Chinese tall, slight, and when young had no doubt been very handsome. Amongst our party was, as I have before said, one lady, and though from what we heard only one English lady had ever been seen in these parts before, and that too several years ago, the semi-Chinese female expressed no curiosity on the subject of crinoline, though our fair friend's proportions must have struck the lady of the mansion with the notion that all she beheld could not be attributable to nature. We saw some of the tin, but it had more the appearance of wolfram or iron pyrites, and to our uninstructed eyes seemed very unlike the tin of commerce.

The old lady was very inquisitive as to our motives for visiting her, and when our reasons were explained, namely, that we merely wished to see the place and the tin-workings, she seemed by no means satisfied.

There was much of novelty in the feeling that we were actually in a country that was not subject to British rule. Of course this feeling is exclusively Anglo-Indian, which the residents of England, who rush from one capital to another in the course of a few hours, cannot comprehend, nor the almost boundless extent of our national sway in the East.

Previous to leaving the boats we had been warned that if we delayed our return, we should find the boats high and dry, and thus become fixtures till the night tide relieved us; and, having vivid recollections of the gadflies and mosquitoes, we walked sharp down to the creek though the heat was very great. Our pull back was much more rapid than our going up, and we were once again on board the steamer by noon, without any adventure of any kind during our trip, which certainly ought not to have been so placidly managed. We then 'up anchor,' and passing some very fine scenery, particularly on the Siam shore, arrived and dropped anchor off the Mallywoon creek.

We had a severe squall, thunder, lightning, wind and rain, which made the evening actually cold—so much so that we were glad to put on warm coats.

This river is much like the Tenasserim, wooded to the water's edge, but the background is composed of more lofty hills.

On the following morning our two companions returned, one of them with a small pig under his arm, which had been his bedfellow during the night, and of whom, horrible to say, he ate a part that same morning for breakfast. After dinner, about five, we started up the Mallywoon Creek in a couple

of boats, some shikarries having made their appearance and informed us of a herd of elephants that were roaming about these parts. Somewhere about ten at night, on opening my eyes, I saw men with torches scrambling up a steep muddy bank carrying portions of the kit of my two companions, who had gone in the other boat. It appeared that we had come to the end of the creek, and that if we could only escape slipping down and being buried in the slimy mud, we should find a hut erected for us on the bank. Having accomplished this feat, we found a shed about six feet four by nine, in which we had to pack ourselves—three big men, and the fourth an extra sized one, in the above space. The morning's light showed us that we were located on a *toungya*, with a village consisting of nine or ten houses inhabited by Shans. The mist was hanging heavily over jungle and tree tops, and everything was as damp and moist as Mantalini proposed making his body, and therefore tea was a luxury extremely welcome, which having drunk, each of us took his small amount of meat and drink and walked off in different directions into the jungles; but no sooner had we put foot into them than we found that we carried on our own persons the commissariat of those horrid little brutes the jungle leeches, which were numerous. I got on the track of a large elephant and followed him for some time, in doing which my foot was twice almost on green snakes, which on first sight I knew to be venomous, and killing them turned up their fangs, which, for the size of the animals, were very large. Many years ago, on the Western Ghats of the peninsula of India, I saw one of the same kind of snakes, and the Coorgs who were with me said that the bite was so far venomous as to

destroy the joint it bit. Of course I did not believe it, but shortly after, when riding from Merkara to Verajunderpet (the second town in Coorg), whilst waiting for the boat to cross the Cauvery, about midway between these two places, a man crept out of a hut and salaamed. I saw his foot, all below the ankle-joint was gone. On asking him how this had happened, he said a green snake had bitten him on the instep, and the foot had gradually rotted off. So much for the truth of the Coorgs' story; but, to resume mine

I saw more tortoises and land turtles in this day's wanderings than I have seen during the whole of my life. Thinking that it was time to lay the cloth, but being unwilling to use up food and liquor without knowing how soon I could again replenish the inner man, I managed by signs to ask of the two Shans I had with me where their village lay. They neither spoke nor understood one word of Burmese, and I was equally ignorant of Siamese; but in spite of this I soon found we were completely lost in these jungles. There was no sitting down or stopping still anywhere for the leeches, and to crown all, it came on to pour in torrents. Every now and then one of the Shans got up into a tree, and from thence attempted to ascertain where he was. At length so completely had these men lost their way, that we came back on our own footsteps. This was enough, and putting the Shans aside, I took on myself the task of finding my own way out of this fix. At the commencement they both evidently showed by their actions that I was going quite wrong; however, I ordered them to follow me into a stream; down this I went till it ran into a larger stream. Still continuing downwards, I got to a broad

creek, many of which intersect the forests in these parts. I had not proceeded a couple of hundred yards when I came upon a spot where there were the remains of old tin-washing beds. An exclamation from the men showed they recognised the place, and thence we walked in all right, reaching the huts about two o'clock, having been walking without once even stopping since a little after five.

I found two of our party returned. One of them, Colonel Fytche, had come up to a very large rhinoceros, but as the hill was steep and slippery he was not carrying his rifle, and when the brute, who was lying down on the top of the hill, jumped up suddenly, it was too much for the Burman who was carrying the rifle; he turned and would have fled but he came a header—or, more properly, a facer—and before our friend could get any weapon in hand, the brute was off, fortunately bolting instead of charging.

On my return I mentioned how thoroughly ignorant of these jungles my two guides (?) were, and that if the one of our party who had not yet returned was equally well provided, he stood a good chance of ruralising, and spending the night in the forest; and when hour after hour went by and no signs of him, we fired off guns and sent out parties, but all to no purpose. We sat down to dinner without him, and, I fear, we did not even drink his health; but, nevertheless, we were very well pleased on the following morning, on firing off a gun, to hear it answered, shortly followed by the portly appearance of our friend, who did not seem much the worse for having had his body converted into a nursery for leeches. The account he gave of himself was that he got on the tracks of

a herd of sine, or wild cattle. Three times he came up with them, but they were wild and wary, and always got off before he could pull trigger. When he gave up the chase, he supposed he was a long distance from our location, and as a matter of course, the Shans knew nothing of the direction by which to reach it, and if they found it a difficult matter to determine how to move during daylight, on that fading away it became an utter impossibility. He said his night was by no means so disagreeable as we might have imagined. In the first place, he had had no rain during the day, nor did any fall during the night. He camped on a hill, and clearing away all the fallen leaves and lighting a fire, got rid of all the leeches. His dinner consisted of a light repast of cheroots and brandy and-water; his Burmans, more fortunate, cooked and disposed of a tortoise or two that they had picked up.

After breakfast we started per boats, and getting into the Pakshan River passed the steamer at anchor, and about three miles lower down, entered the Bankasong Creek; but as the tide was running out, we landed on a small point of land with a low hill on it, fished up lots of oysters, had dinner, and then into our boats and up stream with the evening flood tide. I had been asleep for an hour or so when I was awakened by finding myself lying on a surface at an angle of 45° at least,—the fact being that the falling tide had left the boat gradually tilting over. By shouting to the boatmen we got them to come to our assistance; but the boat was too hard and fast to admit of moving her further than throwing her as much as possible towards the bank, and putting shores to prevent her capsizing and shooting us into the mud. On landing, which

I did as soon as the grey light of morning enabled us to see anything, it struck me I had scarcely ever witnessed such a thoroughly wild spot. 'No signs of travel, none of toil; the very air was mute.' Heavy mist was hanging over the narrow stream, and obscuring everything more than twenty feet above our heads. However, the wilder the spot the better pleasing to the hunter's eye, and the heavier the dew the more agreeable the hot cocoa or tea.

We lost no time in getting into the jungles; but only three of us were to the front this day, the midnight-forester being too footsore to leave his boat. After going about half a mile into the jungle I heard the melancholy wailing cry of the gibbon. I had often in different parts of Burmah heard their cry; but so wild and wary are these mild, inoffensive animals, and so dense and inaccessible the forests they inhabit, that I had never succeeded in getting a sight of them in their state of freedom; but here, approaching the direction of the sound, and keeping myself well hidden under brushwood, I saw on the topmost branches of a high tree a very large gibbon of the red species, with his wonderfully long arms and legs extended in the spread-eagle style, and as he was talking at the top of his voice, he was probably addressing a neighbour half a mile off, and it was only his being thus engaged that enabled me to avoid his keen penetrating gaze. Having taken a good look at him I moved on, and soon came on some fresh cropped leaves and the saliva which had dropped from the mouth of a rhinoceros. I took up the trail, and followed at speed. Three times the Sambre (the large Rusa deer) got up before me; but they were safe here. No

trigger was to be pulled at them when such nobler game was on foot

After crossing a broad stream, which I had already done three or four times, the track was lost, and whilst one man went up, the other went down stream, to see where he had quitted the waters. I went straight forward, and when about twenty or thirty yards from the bank put my rifle against a tree, and, unbuckling my shikar belt, threw it and the knife attached to it on to the ground, intending to take a seat on a fallen tree. This noise, though so slight, was sufficient, and I heard the huge brute make a dash away from a thicket which was close to my right. As quick as possible I was after him ; but he was wide awake, and I never got near him again, though the chase carried me miles and miles away, and up a very steep hill. Reluctantly I was compelled to give up the sport, and now became startlingly aware of a fact which, though I had seen, I did not take much heed of during the excitement of the chase—that my trowsers were saturated with blood, and how many leeches had been and still were feeding on me it was impossible to say. Hastening down to the stream, and divesting myself of my clothes in order that they might have the blood washed out of them, I lay in the stream for above half an hour, and should much have liked to pass the remainder of the day personating a ‘wood-nymph’ bathing, but was compelled to consider the distance I was from the boats, and therefore had to quit the clear stream, and after a sharp walk of about two hours and a half duration reached the boats. In my walk back I saw nothing except a fireback pheasant strutting about, and the female of which rose close to me, giving

me a certain shot had I been so inclined. Curious places these birds clear on which to meet circles of about fifty yards in diameter, which are met with repeatedly in these jungles, as clear and clean as though the weeds had all been removed by hand, and the spot swept with a broom. The Shans informed me that this was done by these beautiful birds. The Argus pheasant is also found in these jungles. I heard their cry, which is almost as loud as that of the eagle, but I did not see any. They are, like all creatures whose habitation is far removed from the haunts of man, excessively wild and unapproachable; yet their subtlety is of no avail, the Shans trap and kill them, and sell their skins; our party got three from them.

I said I reached the boats; I should have said where I left them, for boats there were none. My companions having returned and found that if the boats were kept up at our landing-place we should be unable to get away till midnight, wisely took them down stream and left me a canoe in which to catch them up, and the means for refreshing exhausted nature, a very necessary proceeding, as those little brutes had been at their sanguinary work again; and again did I lay my length in the stream, and this time with the fiendish delight to think that the brackish water, for the sea water reaches thus far, would be the death of my tormentors.

In about an hour I got back to the spot where we had dined on our upward journey. Went through the same serious daily occupation; then pulled out and anchored in midstream till turn of tide, which serving us some time during the night, by the first streaks of dawn we found ourselves on board the

steamer again, and shortly after 'up anchor' and away for the unknown waters of the Lenya River. I presume I am not far wrong when I apply the term unknown, as I fancy few who may read this know where the Lenya is, seeing that in a review of a work, partially on this country (Burmah), the editor of the *Saturday Review* pleads ignorance as to the whereabouts of the Salween, a river on whose waters more than a hundred vessels, some of them of the largest size, load during the course of the year. However, for a continuation of our tour.

I have said we got on board the steamer and steamed away. I felt loth to say 'adieu,' and in all probability a long, long adieu, to the waters of the Pakshan. I feel there is so much more to say of that locality that has been left unsaid. In fact the one subject of the canal into the Gulf of Sam would form sufficient matter for a pamphlet, but as other pens have handled this, I will be silent thereon. The tin-workings on the Pakshan, and indeed anywhere within the Tenasserim province where it is worked, may be termed a 'dark trade' I mean that the profits are far larger than anyone is aware of. More than twenty years since, Colonel, then Captain Tremenhore, of the Bengal Engineers, published a report of the tin of the province of Mergui, and he showed that even by their rude process of working it more than cent. per cent. was made by the natives working those streams, and employing the coolies at the regulated price of labour; and yet from that time to this, I believe, the washings and the tin mine at Kahau Hill on the Tenasserim have remained unworked, and only one adventurous and speculative Chinaman has been found to take the workings of the streams running into the Pakshan river. He

deserved success, for on his own responsibility and at his own risk he boldly reduced the taxes in his district to induce an influx of labour. Whether his liberal policy achieved the required result I know not, but he is reported to be very wealthy, and is the king of the district in which he resides, and might return to his native town, Amoy, and support an army of Taepings on the proceeds of the Pakshan tin. But enough of this, or you'll be saying, 'tintinnabula vibrata in auribus.'

It was scarcely yet the break of day,
Yet on we foamed away—away ;

not exactly as Mazeppa did on the back of his steed, but in the steamer, a much more agreeable method of transit I should imagine, though maybe not quite so romantic.

The shadow of our boat no doubt passed over many a coral rock and oyster bed that it had also shadowed on our southward course, for we kept the same track in returning until we came to the 'Corries' which I have previously mentioned, and here we turned somewhat to the eastward, and when between them and High Island, it becoming dark, we dropped anchor.

Sunrise on board ship is always, with few exceptions, extremely beautiful. Of the many scenes that rise up before 'memory's eye,' the strongest and most indelibly traced of a sea board sunrise is one witnessed years ago, the sun rising behind Peter Botte and the range of hills that shelter Port Louis from the east. But this is foreign to my story, except so far that it is a tropical sunrise

The white sails of a Chinese junk stood out in strong relief against the dark woods on High Island — we got up our anchor, which we did just at daylight.

Our slow progress showed that we were contending against a strong ebb, but after passing Barn Island we seemed to get the flood tide and carried it with us up Whale Bay, and passing a prettily wooded island called 'Freshwater Island' at its mouth, entered the Lenya river.

Appreciation of the beautiful is various, fortunately for us, as it would be awkward for the whole of mankind to become enamoured of only one type of female beauty ; and arguing thus, many might prefer the long reaches, more distant views, and prouder waters of the Tenasserim or Pakshan rivers ; but while they were above and around us, I felt a species of awe in passing the lofty hills through which our steamer threaded her way, and that so narrow that she could not have turned in the space. This feeling was entirely absent when on either of the other rivers. The hills covered with forest trees arose to a height of two thousand feet on either side, and that too rising from the margin of the river, no sloping bank of sand or grass to relieve or detract from the sublimity of the precipitous forest. Here and there a huge rock stood on the side, as though hurled headlong from the summit. In passing through this gorge, Scott's lines on Lake Coriskin came to mind, and though few of them were applicable, those few were so appropriate that I cannot but quote them :

Seems that primæval earthquake ■ sway
Hath rent a strange and shattered way
Through the rude bosom of the hill ;
And that each wooded precipice,
Sable ravine and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still

And so doubtless it was, and that to a convulsion of nature of

no ordinary kind must be attributed a river scarcely wider than the length of our little steamer obtaining an exit through such a mountainous chain. But though the river was narrow it was very deep, fifteen fathoms and thereabouts, all through this narrow gorge, which continues for the first half of the way to Lenya about twenty five miles, and which being also very tortuous shows no long reaches, the lofty hills shutting out all beyond a mile or two.

Suddenly we burst through this mass of mountains and come out on a large basin. Here the hills entirely and abruptly ceased on the proper right bank (our left on ascending), but continued for a short distance on the other bank around which we wound. From this spot we had the most distant view we had yet obtained since entering the river, and saw a range of hills about twelve miles distant; towards these we approached, but when close to them and expecting similar scenery to what we had already passed, we turned sharp to our right and continued our course through alluvial soil with mangrove trees on either side till we dropped anchor in six fathoms at low water, off the village of Lenya, being the first steamer that had ever been seen here. On arrival we fired a gun, and observed the inhabitants of the three or four villages which constitute the town of Lenya preparing for a bolt into the jungles; however, seeing some of the officials come off they did the same, and the steamer was shortly after crowded by men and women, particularly by those of the gentler, and here I might really say, fairer sex, for some of the women showed the red blood in their cheeks, but they were all, without a single exception, very ugly, and their personal appearance certainly not improved by the peculiar

method of wearing their hair, which might well be termed, 'à la blacking brush.

On this river, as well as on the Tenasserim, coal is found, but strange to say, either the energy to work the fields is wanting or Tenasserim coal has not yet recovered from Burdwan coal fever ; but no doubt the Calcutta and Burmah Steam Navigation Company will be able to administer the specific for that complaint.

We found the difference in the temperature between that in the open sea and inland, as we now were, and the night at Lèhŷa was unbearably hot. Scarce was it light before the decks were crowded with male and female Shans. I tried to make a sketch of three of the beauties, but fear I failed in doing them justice, by which I mean I did not make them sufficiently ugly. About ten we all went on shore to see a buffalo fight. I was prepared for something worth looking at, as the Burmese buffalo is an animal which might well be classed amongst the fighting castes, but we were miserably disappointed. It was a thoroughly stupid affair. Only one pair fought at all, and these, after about five minutes driving at each other's heads, bolted, the one after the other, the chase being by far the best part of the performance. Here, unlike the buffalo fights in Martaban, the animals are not ridden, but are led to smell each other's noses, and are supposed to be sufficiently Irish in their propensities to commence hostilities on such nasal provocation. We found the heat excessive, and were glad to make our way back to the steamer, which at about ten o'clock commenced steaming against the flood tide. A very severe squall came down on us, and quite changed the

feeling of the weather. The clouds descending for some time entirely hid the hills from our view. Gradually they rose, and we were again passing through the narrow gorge: the mist wreaths were hanging on the mountains' side, while below the clear yellow and crimson tints of departing day were visible.

We steamed on till some hours after dark, when we dropped anchor in eight fathoms off Oop mau Point, Whale Bay.

We were astir very early, as the Shan shikaries gave us hopes of rhinoceros, and as we were only to have till noon on shore, our actions were of necessity to be sharp, if we hoped to bring any animal to bag.

On landing I almost immediately hit on the fresh spoor of a rhinoceros, followed it for some distance, but lost it in a dense mangrove swamp—that is, I could not follow through the tangled break of rattans and thorns where my thick-coated friend, after whom I was in chase, had gone with apparent satisfaction to himself. In my wanderings I picked up a deer's head, the like of which I have never seen, either in this country or in India. Herewith a sketch of the same. To me it seems more to resemble some of those animals of Central Africa, depicted in Harris's sports on that continent.

As usual, my Shan did not know our whereabouts, but this did not matter now, I being independent of his knowledge, or want of knowledge of our locality, having already learnt the lesson of not venturing into these jungles without my pocket compass.

As I was making my way to the boat I came upon the fresh track of a herd of elephants, which I followed for a short

distance, but seeing from the cut sprays that some one was already on their track, I did not continue; however, I afterwards found that neither of my companions had given them chase, so there must have been some other hunters near us, of whose proximity we were unaware.

One of our party came upon a tiger eating a boa constrictor—I suppose I had better qualify this, and call the tiger's dinner a python or rock snake, otherwise some naturalist will be saying that there are no boa constrictors in this country.

We did not quit Whale Bay till 4 P.M., and at about three hours later dropped anchor near our old friends the Elephant Rocks. We retraced the same path of waters to Mergui, where we arrived on the second day from leaving Whale Bay. Slept on shore that night, and on the following morning were away for Maulmein. That night it blew hard, but we fortunately escaped rain.

It is dawn, and we are abreast of Green Island, which lies about a mile westward of Amherst. What a rolling night we have had of it! I, who sleep on the deck, have been in momentary expectation of my big friend fetching way off the table, which is his 'standing berth,' and coming down on me. It is six o'clock, and we are just passing the reef buoy, the furthest seaward that marks the entrance to the Sakyeen River.

What's that boat pulling out to the sou' west for? Eh? yes, there she is. the mail steamer from Calcutta, and we shall have our English letters to-day before noon.

'Don't be too sure of that,' says a knowing 'sail.' 'By the time the mail steamer is up here it will be about half ebb,

and there will be no getting over "the flats" for her till the flood makes.' He was right: our English letters were not in our hands till evening, the mail steamer arriving about four, while our little "Nemesis" had dropped her anchor by eleven, and a few minutes later saw us safe on the main wharf at Maulmein.

Appropos to the party we had on board the Nemesis I suppose it was because they were not bound on the same tour as ourselves, whose names I have entered, that made me overlook the other passengers, who consisted of Mr Stevenson, the Deputy Commissioner's wife, and Major Ford for Faigy, and Staupfeld, Nicholson and Lamack (the latter the doctor) for the Andamans.

